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ENGL 015  
Assignment 3  
July 20, 2011  
Audience: those who have never  
 experienced domestic violence

Do You Know How it Feels?

Do you know how it feels –   
To sit in your room as a teenager.  
Stereo blasting music,   
But somehow you can’t hear it.

Do you know how it feels-  
To sit on a bed clothed in   
Stars, suns, and moons,  
And wish to be as far from this earth as possible.

Do you know how it feels-  
To have wooden floorboards holding you up,  
Yet splintering   
From the sharp words being thrown at them.  
They could snap at any moment,  
They could leave you alone and helpless,  
Dangling in the air, with no escape.  
Do you know how it feels?

Do you know how it feels-  
To strain your ears,  
Blocking out the music you use to drown out the shouting  
From below,  
Trying still to hear the words being exchanged.

Do you know how it feels-  
To have your mom scream your name,  
Out of fear?  
She couldn’t possibly be saying your name.  
Maybe she got confused again and is trying to yell at the dog.  
But why would she sound so frightened?

There it is again.  
And again.

It is, it is your name.  
You jump to your feet,  
Clouds come into view,   
Not the white fluffy ones, but the dark, foreboding kind that threaten storms.  
You must have stood up too fast.  
You try to find the door only steps away from the bed,  
But your feet are having trouble finding the way.

Do you know how it feels-  
To run down the stairs as if they weren’t there,  
Your feet never touching a single step.  
You’re just bounding down the stairwell,   
Cursing it the whole time for existing,  
For becoming a barrier between you and your mother  
Rather than the connection between you that it should be.

Do you know how it feels-  
To see your mother on a chair,  
A man standing overtop of her so that she cannot move  
Swinging his arms,  
Like boulders crashing down onto your mother’s fragile body.  
One by one, crash after crash.

To see the bruises almost appear instantly  
To see tears streaming down your mother’s face,  
Not ‘cause she’s proud of you.  
Not ‘cause she loves you and is afraid you are growing up too fast.  
Not ‘cause she saw a tear-jerking movie with you like she did just last week.  
But because she is scared, she is hurt, she doesn’t know what to do.  
Do you know how it feels?

Do you know how it feels-  
To hear a voice so foreign,  
A scream so loud and disturbing,  
And then realize it was your own?

You couldn’t possibly be talking, you can barely feel your body at all  
Nothing except the beat of your heart making your body tremble   
and the sound of your breath like a whisper.

You couldn’t possibly have made that noise.  
At games you’ve tried screaming and your voice would crack.  
You’d try yelling for a friend, but they couldn’t hear you.  
You weren’t loud enough.

No, there’s no way you screamed that loud.  
You can’t feel your throat.   
You can barely breathe.  
If you can’t breathe, there’s no way that you can vocalize something so strong.

But yet, there’s no one around.  
It’s just you, your mom, the dog,

And him.

Him.

I knew there was something wrong from the moment I met him.  
He was drunk then just like he is now.  
He’s a worthless piece of flesh,  
A waste of a life.  
And yet, he’s trying to take away someone else’s.

What gives him the right?

He doesn’t deserve her.  
He doesn’t deserve anyone.  
He’s a drunk.  
He’s a trash-collector.  
He doesn’t even have a brain.

Do you know how it feels-  
To have your feet cemented into the floor.  
To want desperately to go push him away.  
To want desperately to run to your mother and hold her,  
To shield her from the blasts,  
But not be able to.

The only life you can save is the dog’s  
Who doesn’t seem to be in danger.  
But you see him and instantly pick him up,  
Without thinking about what you are doing.

Did I think he would hit the dog?  
I saw him do it before.  
Or was I just holding on to something,  
Anything,  
So that it felt like I was holding on to reality.  
So that there was something of substance in my hands,  
So that I knew I was not dreaming, that this was real.

Do you know how it feels-  
To be told that you must go back upstairs  
After traveling miles across unknown lands  
And try to find your way back?

To be told that you have to leave your mother.  
She was helpless just seconds ago  
She yelled for me, she called my name  
She needed me.  
Why would someone tell me to walk away?

But I did.  
I took the dog back upstairs.  
I felt my feet drag across each and every step leading up to my room.  
I felt the weight of my legs, like lead,   
keeping me from leaving the room where my mother sat.

Do you know how it feels-  
To have no one to talk to.  
After the most terrifying moment in your life,  
To only have your pet dog to listen.  
To hold you when you cried.

Do you know how it feels-  
To sit there in your room,  
Still listening,   
Still drowning out the music,  
Just waiting for it to happen again.  
Waiting for it to get worse.  
Waiting for the moment when  
It all starts again.

Do you know how it feels?  
I hope you never do.